

A most Toad-spotted Traitor. Say thou no,
This Sword, this arme, and my best spirits are bent
To proue vpon thy heart, whereto I speake,
Thou lyest.

Bast. In wisdom I should aske thy name,
But since thy out-side lookes so faire and Warlike,
And that thy tongue (some say) of breeding breathes,
What safe, and nicely I might well delay,
By rule of Knight-hood, I disdain'd and spurne:
Backe do I tesse these Treasons to thy head,
With the bell-hated Lye, ore-whelme thy heart,
Which for they yet glance by, and scarcely bruise,
This Sword of mine shall giue them instant way,
Where they shall rest for euer. Trumpets speake.

Alb. Saue him, saue him. *Alarums. Fights.*

Gon. This is practise *Gloster*,
By th'law of Warre, thou wast not bound to answer
An vnknowne opposite: thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozend, and beguild.

Alb. Shut your mouth Dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it: hold Sir,
Thou worse then any name, reade thine owne euill:
No tearing Lady, I perceiue you know it.

Gon. Say if I do, the Lawes are mine not thine,
Who can arraigne me for't? *Exit.*

Alb. Most monstrous! O, know'st thou this paper?

Bast. Aske me not what I know.

Alb. Go after her, she's desperate, gouerne her.

Bast. What you haue charg'd me with,
That haue I done,
And more, much more, the time will bring it out.
'Tis past, and so am I: But what art thou
That hast this Fortune on me? If thou'rt Noble,
I do forgiue thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity:
I am no lesse in blood then thou art *Edmond*,
If more, the more th' hast wrong'd me.
My name is *Edgar* and thy Fathers Sonne,
The Gods are iust, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague vs:
The darke and virtuous place where thee he got,
Cost him his eyes.

Bast. Th' hast spoken right, 'tis true,

The Wheele is come full circle, I am heere.

Alb. Me thought thy very gate did prophesie

A Royall Noblenesse: I must embrace thee,

Let sorrow split my heart, if euer I

Did hate thee, or thy Father.

Edg. Worthy Prince I know't.

Alb. Where haue you hid your selfe?

How haue you knowne the mileries of your Father?

Edg. By nursing them my Lord. List a breefe tale,

And when 'tis told, O that my heart would burst.

The bloody proclamation to escape

That follow'd me so neere, (O our liues sweetnesse,

That we the paine of death would hourly dye,

Rather then die at once) taught me to shift

Into a mad-mans rags, to assume a semblance

That very Dogges disdain'd: and in this habit

Met I my Father with his bleeding Rings,

Their precious Stones new lost: became his guide,

Led him, begg'd for him, sau'd him from dispaire.

Neuer (O fault) renew'd my selfe vnto him,

Vntill some halfe houre past when I was arm'd,

Not sure, though hoping of this good successe,

I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last

Told him our pilgrimage. But his flaw'd heart
(Alacke too weake the confid' to support)
Twixt two extremes of passion, ioy and greefe,
Burst smilingly.

Bast. This speech of yours hath mou'd me,
And shall perchance do good, but speake you on,
You looke as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more wofull, hold it in,
For I am almost ready to dissolue,
Hearing of this.

Enter a Gentleman.

Gen. Helpe, helpe: O helpe.

Edg. What kinde of helpe?

Alb. Speake man.

Edg. What meanes this bloody Knife?

Gen. 'Tis hot, it smoakes, it came euen from the heart
of—O she's dead.

Alb. Who dead? Speake man.

Gen. Your Lady Sir, your Lady; and her Sister
By her is poyson'd: she confesses it.

Bast. I was contracted to them both, all three
Now marry in an instant.

Edg. Here comes *Kent*.

Enter Kent.

Alb. Produce the bodies, be they aliue or dead;

Conerill and Regans bodies brought out.

This iudgement of the Heauens that makes vs tremble,

Touches vs not with pittie: O, is this he?

The time will not allow the complement

Which very manners vrge.

Kent. I am come

To bid my King and Master aye good night.

Is he not here?

Alb. Great thing of vs forgot,

Speake *Edmund*, where's the King? and where's *Cordelia*?

Seest thou this obiekt *Kent*?

Kent. Alacke, why thus?

Bast. Yet *Edmund* was belou'd:

The one the other poyson'd for my sake,

And after flew her selfe.

Alb. Euen so: couer their faces.

Bast. I pant for life: some good I meane to do

Despight of mine owne Nature. Quickly send,

(Be briefe in it) to th' Castle, for my Writ

Is on the life of *Lear*, and on *Cordelia*:

Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O run.

Edg. To who my Lord? Who ha's the Office?

Send thy token of repreeue.

Bast. Well thought on, take my Sword,

Giue it the Capitaine.

Edg. Hast thee for thy life.

Bast. He hath Commission from thy Wife and me,

To hang *Cordelia* in the prison, and

To lay the blame vpon her owne dispaire,

That she for-did her selfe.

Alb. The Gods defend her, beare him hence awhile.

Enter Lear with Cordelia in his armes.

Lear. Howle, howle, howle: O you are men of stones,

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd vse them so,

That Heauens vault should crack: she's gone for euer.

I know when one is dead, and when one liues,

She's dead as earth: Lend me a Looking-glasse,

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If that her breath will mist or staine the stone,
Why then she liues.

Kent. Is this the promis'd end?

Edg. Or image of that horror.

Alb. Fall and cease.

Lear. This feather stirs, she liues: if it be so,

It is a chance which do's redeeme all forrowes

That euer I haue felt.

Kent. O my good Master.

Lear. Prythee away.

Edg. 'Tis Noble *Kent* your Friend.

Lear. A plague vpon you Murderers, Traitors all,

I might haue sau'd her, now she's gone for euer:

Cordelia. *Cordelia*, stay a little. Ha:

What is't thou saist? Her voice was euer soft,

Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.

I kill'd the Slaue that was a hanging thee.

Gen. 'Tis true (my Lords) he did.

Lear. Did I not follow?

I haue seene the day, with my good biting Faulchion

I would haue made him skip: I am old now,

And these same crosses spoile me. Who are you?

My eyes are not o'th best, Ile tell you straight.

Kent. If Fortune brag of two, she lou'd and hated,

One of them we behold.

Lear. This is a dull fight, are you not *Kent*?

Kent. The same: your Seruant *Kent*,

Where is your Seruant *Caius*?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that,

He'll strike and quickly too, he's dead and rotten.

Kent. No my good Lord, I am the very man.

Lear. Ile see that straight.

Kent. That from your first of difference and decay,

Haue follow'd your sad steps.

Lear. Your are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else:

All's cheerelesse, darke, and deadly,

Your eldest Daughters haue fore-done themselues,

And desperately are dead

Lear. I so I thinke.

Alb. He knowes not what he saies, and vaine is it

That we present vs to him.

Enter a Messenger.

Edg. Very bootlesse.

Mess. *Edmund* is dead my Lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle heere:

You Lords and Noble Friends, know our intent,

What comfort to this great decay may come,

Shall be appli'd. For vs we will resigne,

During the life of this old Maiesty

To him our absolute power, you to your rights,

With boote, and such addition as your Honours

Haue more then merited. All Friends shall

Taste the wages of their vertue, and all Foes

The cup of their deservings: O see, see.

Lear. And my poore Foole is hang'd: no, no, no life?

Why should a Dog, a Horse, a Rat haue life,

And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,

Neuer, neuer, neuer, neuer, neuer.

Pray you vndo this Button. Thanke you Sir,

Do you see this? Look on her? Look on her lips,

Look on there, look on there. *He dies.*

Edg. He faints, my Lord, my Lord.

Kent. Breake heart, I prythee breake.

Edg. Look on vp my Lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost, O let him passe, he hates him,

That would vpon the wracke of this rough world

Stretch him out longer.

Edg. He is gon indeed.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endur'd so long,

He but vsurpt his life.

Alb. Beare them from hence, our present businesse

Is generall woe: Friends of my soule, you twaine,

Rule in this Realme, and the gor'd state sustaine.

Kent. I haue a iourney Sir, shortly to go,

My Master calls me, I must not say no.

Edg. The waight of this sad time we must obey,

Speake what we feele, not what we ought to say:

The oldest hath borne most, we that are yong,

Shall neuer see so much, nor liue so long.

Exeunt with a dead March.

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FINIS.